



# Fostering a Loving Relationship with Your Children

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Having a loving relationship with your children is a beautiful thing. However, it may not always come easily because children express love in their own unique way. You love your children very much, so it's important to learn each child's unique and preferred ways of communicating love.

### Determine Your Child's "Love Language"

***The best way to make your child feel loved and safe is to discover how they would like to be loved and go with their preference.***

This may not be the same way that you like to be loved yourself:

- Many children enjoy "feeling" and desire lots of hugs and kisses.
- Some children are more "hearing" oriented and want to hear how much you love them.
- Others want to "see" expressions of your love through cards, notes, or other visual means.
- Some want you nearby at all times, while others are happiest with their independence.

### Listen To Your Children

There are many things to keep in mind as you strengthen your relationship with your children, but perhaps the most important is the fact that ***you need to let your children become independent and find their true selves.***

You'll want to give your children your attention while, at the same time, allowing them freedom. You can do this by allowing them to spend time with their friends, but make sure you schedule a regular get together at your own house so you can remain involved.

While it's critical to let them know your feelings on important subjects, at the same time be sure to value your child's opinion also. They need to have their say, too! This means that you need to ***trust your kids and believe that they'll make good decisions.***

## **Understanding Your Children**

You may not remember what it was like to go through the same stages your children are going through, however, it's important to at least *try* to understand their underlying thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.

### **Here are some communication tips:**

- Get down on the child's level - talk *with* them and not *down to* them.
- Really listen to what they're saying.
- Don't judge them - you can help them through problems without passing judgment.
- Be sympathetic - tell them about a time when you faced a similar problem.

## **Spend Time with Your Children**

While there are different love languages that you can use to express love with your children, ***spending time with your kids is a part of all of them.*** Whether you're simply engaging in everyday activities or you're going on an exciting adventure, treasure each moment with your child!

If you have more than one child, it's important to spend individual time with each of them. ***Children need to feel special*** and, by giving your individual attention, it shows them your love.

## **The Teenage Years**

When your kids grow into their teenage years, it can prove to be a difficult time. Teens sometimes withdraw and decide to spend more time with friends rather than family. However, there are still strategies you can follow to continue a loving relationship.

### **Here are some things to remember:**

- ***Allow your teenager privacy.*** Trust your teen if you have no reason to do otherwise.
- Treat him like an adult as often as possible, but maintain the parent/child connection.
- Have dinner together every day.

When you have dinner together as a family, it's quality time. You can use this time to keep in touch with their lives, hopes and aspirations. Teens and other family members can get busy and it's important to have those windows into their lives every day. ***Frequent communication is a key to any loving relationship.***

Use these tips to foster the type of relationship you've always wanted with your children and enjoy the benefits for the rest of your life!